



FEMA

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News Release

Washington State's Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan Pays Off

State receives more funding because of a FEMA approved enhanced mitigation plan

OLYMPIA, WA – Washington was the first state in the nation to have an enhanced State Mitigation Plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Approval of the plan increases Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds from 7.5 percent to 20 percent, providing a greater allotment to implement the state's mitigation program.

Hazard mitigation is any sustained action that is taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risks to people and property from natural hazards. In recognition of a state's comprehensive planning effort, additional HMGP funding is available when an approved Enhanced State Mitigation plan is in effect at the time of a disaster declaration. Washington received a presidential declaration on May 17, for the Jan. 27 through Feb. 4 winter storm.

"Washington's enhanced plan was approved in 2004, which is a reflection of their excellent hazard mitigation program," said Lee Champagne, FEMA's federal coordinating officer. "Their planning effort now enables the state to receive a 20 percent share of the total costs of the current disaster declaration for mitigation measures."

The HMGP, authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and funded by FEMA, provides grants to states, tribes and local governments to implement long-term mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration.

"Hazard mitigation is a collaborative process whereby hazards affecting the community are identified, vulnerability to the hazards are assessed, and consensus reached on how to minimize or eliminate the effects of these hazards," said Kurt Hardin, Washington State coordinating officer.

The goals of hazard mitigation are twofold:

1. Contribute to the development of a long-term, comprehensive mitigation program by funding measures designed to achieve the goals of the state hazard mitigation plan;
2. Assist state and local governments in avoiding or lessening the impact of natural hazards through safer building practices and the improvement of existing structures and supporting infrastructure.

For more information go to <http://www.gema.gov/firma/>

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003